



Advisory
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Milestone Reached in Relicensing DWR's Oroville Facilities



DWR's application for a new federal license to operate the Oroville Facilities is signed by Director Lester A. Snow. Joining Director Snow at the January 14 signing in Sacramento are (L-R) Barbara McDonnell of Environmental Services, Rick Ramirez and Ralph Torres of Oroville Facilities Relicensing Program, and Ward Tabor of the Chief Counsel's Office. (Photo by Steve Payer)

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today filed an application for a new federal license to operate its Oroville Facilities – the heart of the State Water Project.

The application - signed by DWR Director Lester A. Snow - was filed with the Federal

Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington, D.C.

The Oroville Facilities include Oroville Dam (tallest in the nation at 770 feet), and Lake Oroville, the State Water Project's principal storage reservoir with a capacity of 3.5 million acre-feet.

From Lake Oroville, water flows through three hydroelectric powerplants before moving down the Feather and Sacramento rivers. The electricity generated is used to pump water through the State Water Project (SWP), which provides water to more than 23 million people, industry, and approximately 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Coast, San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California.

Extending more than 660 miles, the SWP is the largest state-owned, user-financed water system in the United States.

Under terms of their contracts with the State of California, the 29 public agencies (State Water Project Contractors) that receive supplies from the SWP pay approximately 94 percent of Project costs, including construction and operations and maintenance.

A multi-purpose project, the SWP provides flood control, recreation, salinity control and fishery and wildlife enhancement in addition to water supply and energy.

DWR's original, 50-year federal license to operate the Oroville Facilities expires on January 31, 2007. This month was the deadline for submitting the application for a new license.

Completion of the application marks a major milestone for DWR. Approximately 1,200 stakeholders helped shape the application package that was put together after more than five years of collaborative effort involving hundreds of meetings and some 165 technical reports.

In its new license application, DWR has proposed providing increased recreational, fishery, cultural and other benefits to the Oroville and Butte County community and other stakeholders. FERC will analyze the proposal over the next two years and is scheduled to issue a new license by January 31, 2007.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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